

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 SSO-00 AID-05
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FM USMISSION GENEVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0654
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 08794

FOR HA FROM LOWMAN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF
SUBJECT: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES: SINGAPORE TRANSIT CENTER

1. IN DISCUSSIONS WITH UNHCR SENIOR STAFF ON TRANSIT CENTER, IT WAS MADE CLEAR THEY NOT INCLINED TO PROCEED FURTHER WITHOUT ANSWER FROM GOS TO MACE LETTER OF DECEMBER 1977 OR OTHER CHANGE IN SITUATIONS. THEY BELIEVE THEY HAVE DONE ALL THEY CAN WITHOUT SUCH A NEW ELEMENT THOUGH LOWMAN NOTED THEY COULD ALWAYS DRAW UPON MORAL AUTHORITY OF HCR'S OFFICE TO PUBLICLY URGE GOS TOWARDS A MORE HUMANITARIAN STANCE.

2. MACE AND OTHERS, HOWEVER, FELT UNHCR COULD USEFULLY INITIATE A NEW APPROACH TO SINGAPORE IF USG COULD RESERVE A SPECIFIC BLOC OF NUMBERS FOR THIS PURPOSE FROM
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THE PROPOSED PAROLE. UNHCR COULD COLLECT SOME NUMBERS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES, AS WELL, AND USE THESE TO STRENGTHEN THEIR "BEST EFFORTS" GUARANTEE. MACE PREDICTED GOS WOULD OPEN UP ONLY TO EXTENT GUARANTEES COVERED BY AVAILABLE NUMBERS. THIS IS PROBABLY TRUE; AT LEAST INITIALLY. NEVERTHELESS, ALL FELT SUCH PROGRESS MIGHT LATER DEVELOP EVEN FURTHER AND SYSTEM

WOULD BE WELL WORTH TRYING.

3. SOME FELT GUARANTEE MIGHT BE LIMITED TO REFUGEES
ARRIVING ON COMMERCIAL VESSELS THOUGH NOT CONDONING
GOS TURNING AWAY REFUGEES ARRIVING BY SMALL CRAFT.
POINT OF DISTINCTION WOULD BE THAT SIMILAR GUARANTEES
COULD BE GIVEN OTHER COUNTRIES AS WELL WITHOUT
SETTING PRECEDENT OF SPECIAL TREATMENT FOR SINGAPORE BY
GUARANTEEING IN ADVANCE ALL REFUGEES ARRIVING BY SMALL
CRAFT. WHILE SOMEWHAT UNEASY ABOUT SUCH A LIMITATION,
LOWMAN SEES MERIT IN IDEA IN VIEW OF RAPIDLY GROWING
CASELOAD AND WOULD WELCOME DEPARTMENT'S THOUGHTS.

4. RECOMMEND THAT WHEN PAROLE AUTHORIZED, ABOUT 500
NUMBERS BE ALLOCATED TO UNHCR FOR SINGAPORE ON CONDITION
ADDITIONAL NUMBERS BE OBTAINED FROM OTHER COUNTRIES
BEFORE UNHCR APPROACHES GOS. VANDEN HEUVEL

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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